



DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

16 NOV 1979

433/DI-7C


MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUBJECT: PW/MIA Status Report

1. On 17 October of this year, I testified before the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs regarding the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action issue. On 8 November, RADM J. O. Tuttle, in my behalf, briefed Congressman Wolff (Subcommittee Chairman) and other select Subcommittee members regarding recent reports and events pertaining to the PW/MIA issue. To keep you apprised of the information provided to the Subcommittee, I have enclosed a summary which was submitted to Congressman Wolff regarding significant items of PW/MIA information obtained from Indochinese refugees.

2. I cautioned the Subcommittee that public disclosure of this type information would jeopardize the lives of any Americans who may still remain in Southeast Asia. I requested the Subcommittee accord the enclosed information limited dissemination.

3. I will continue to keep you, and the Subcommittee, apprised of the status of pertinent PW/MIA reports.


A. L. KELLY
Rear Admiral, USN
Deputy Director

6 Enclosures

1. *SC* 1 cy
2. French Press Article, 1 cy
3. Hong Kong Refugee, 1 cy
4. General Vang Pao, 1 cy
5. Vietnamese Refugee in Bourges, France, 1 cy
6. US Army Interviewer, 1 cy

cc:
DJS

In late 1978, Vietnamese refugee *SC* living in an Indonesian resettlement camp reported that he had firsthand knowledge of a group of 49 American prisoners of war in Vietnam as recently as August 1978. *SC* was subsequently interviewed by representatives of governmental and private organizations. *SC* was eventually resettled in West Germany, having been denied entry into the US. In October 1979, a DIA debriefing team traveled to West Germany and interviewed *SC* in detail to establish as comprehensive a data base as possible from which to evaluate his account. The debriefing team returned to Washington on the evening of 30 October. A draft of their findings has been prepared and is being reviewed at this time. DIA continues efforts to confirm those aspects of *SC* account which relate to his access to PW/MIA related information. The results of these efforts will be forwarded to you without delay.

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FRENCH PRESS ARTICLE

On 17 October 1979, SC a Vietnamese refugee in France published an article in the Le Matin Newspaper concerning Cuban forces in Vietnam, Soviet missile launcher bases and 33 American PWs in Hanoi. Numerous attempts have been made by the American Embassy, the USDAO, and French officials to contact the refugee. To date, all these efforts have proven unsuccessful.

Based upon information currently maintained by DIA, SC information does not appear accurate. The information provided on the Cuban forces is suspect and the information regarding Soviet missile launcher bases in Vietnam could not be confirmed. The information provided by the refugee concerning the 33 Americans, some with families, who were brought through East European countries on Aeroflot Airlines, and living in comfortable quarters in Hanoi also cannot be confirmed via information currently maintained by DIA. An in-depth interview is required before further judgment can be made on the information. DIA will continue to pursue all available avenues to locate and interview the refugee.

HONG KONG REFUGEE

On 30 October 1979, a Vietnamese refugee, SC while in Hong Kong stated that he was responsible for the caretaking of 426 bodies of US servicemen who died in Vietnam. He stated that the remains were held in a former US PW camp in Hanoi. In subsequent debriefings SC stated that he had also observed three Americans in Hanoi as late as New Year's Day 1979.

If confirmable, SC may possess casualty resolution information of the utmost importance to the US Government. Several details provided by SC regarding US remains equates to known information and could only have been provided by someone intimately familiar with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's (SRV) efforts to return US remains. For example, SC stated that he had gone to Saigon in January 1976 to recover the remains of three Americans, two Caucasians and one Negro, who had been killed during 1975 near the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital. The refugee stated that he was directed to remove the bones from the flesh before the bodies were to be given back to the US. This information equates to known facts. On 22 February the skeletal remains of CPL C, McMahon and LCPL D. L. Judge, both USMC were returned to the US. Both had been assigned to the US Embassy in Saigon at the time they became casualties. Their bodies were left at the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital during the evacuation of Saigon. Based upon this kind of detail it appears that SC is providing credible information concerning certain aspects of the US remains.

The following actions are being undertaken by DIA to gain further information regarding SC knowledge of US remains and the three Americans in Hanoi. Because SC provided an extremely detailed physical description of the three Americans from the viewpoint of a mortician, the Joint Casualty Resolution Center has been directed to provide the physical descriptions to the Central Identification Laboratory (CIL) in Hawaii. The CIL may be able to tentatively identify one or more unaccounted-for Americans who match the physical description.

The State Department arranged to have SC and his niece brought into the US. SC and his niece arrived in Washington on 8 November 1979. The DIA debriefing team will interview SC in Washington in great detail regarding his information. It should be noted that SC has been polygraphed in Hong Kong; however, he failed on some major points of his information. An in-depth interview by qualified DIA analysts is required before confirmation of SC information is accomplished.

SC
On 12 October, information was provided by SC former Commander of Military Region II and all Meo forces in Laos. His information stated that in March 1979, 18 Americans and 25 other prisoners were moved into Laos from the Vietnam/Chinese border area. Reportedly, these alleged prisoners were evacuated from the Chinese invading forces. They were initially brought to Vieng Say, Laos, and from there they were put aboard two airplanes and flown to Nape, Laos. This information was passed to DIA by Congressman Benjamin Gilman through the subcommittee. On 19 October, a DoD representative, under DIA guidance, interviewed the SC who is currently residing in SD, stated that he had obtained his information in a letter from a Lao acquaintance named SS had received the letter from a Lao named SS, who was described as a regimental commander of one of the Lao resistance groups. His exact whereabouts are uncertain, but he is probably based in Thailand. SC served in the Lao army with this individual, but has had no personal contact with him for several years. The DoD representative will be interviewing SS on 9 November in an attempt to obtain further information concerning the report and to ascertain the location of SS so that we might talk to him about his information.

An analysis of the Vieng Say and Nape areas has been conducted and pertinent information resulting from this analysis is provided as follows:

a. A detailed 10 kilometer radius search of the Vieng Say area to include the Ban Nakay Teu area was made. Ban Nakay Teu no longer serves as a PW detention facility. The area has totally changed with only the cave area remaining the same. The rest of the facility has been torn down. New buildings which serve in an undertermined administrative/support purpose have been erected and are incorporated into the greater Vieng Say complex. The Vieng Say complex was built between 1973 and the present to replace Sam Neua as the logistical, political and administrative center for northeast Laos. No facility exhibiting any of the normal signatures for PW camps can now be identified in the area.

b. Regarding Nape Airfield, it is and has been abandoned since at least 1968. The runway has been converted to agricultural use. Only helicopter landings could be effected throughout the greater Nape area. Furthermore, no PW camps or detention facilities were noted within 10 kilometers of Nape Airfield.

VIETNAMESE REFUGEE IN BOURGES, FRANCE

The National League of Families provided a 20 October 1979 letter written by a Vietnamese refugee, SC who had been resettled in France. In the letter SC indicated that he had information on US PWs still in Vietnam and would like to provide his information to the US.

Inasmuch as the DIA Debriefing Team was in Stuttgart, West Germany at the time, the information was passed to them to locate SC with the assistance of the US Defense Attache Office (DAO) in Paris and to interview him when located. The team departed Germany before there was any indication that SC would be located.

On 3 November the Embassy in Paris informed DIA that they had, after some difficulty, located SC in a refugee camp in Bourges, France. The DAO in Paris is scheduled to interview him on 7 November 1979. Questions to be asked of the source have been passed to the DAO for planning the interview.

A second letter written by SC to the League of Families, stated that SC had seen 25 US PWs on 25 October 1978 and 28 on 2 November 1979 - the same group with three others added. On these two occasions the PWs were on hard labor details; carrying wood on the 25th and digging for agricultural purposes on the 2nd. The PWs were guarded and held in a camp, in five small thatched huts, in a forested part of a valley about 150 kilometers northwest of Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City). The PWs wore striped and black clothing (some without coats because of the heat); they appeared thin and very tired. SC was unable to make contact with them, although he tried. SC also briefly identified four US Advisors, with whom he had worked during the period 1965 through 1971, while he was the 2nd Battalion Commander at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Saigon. He also stated he had received a victory medal, Bronze Star (Bronze Star with the "V" device) from President Johnson in 1968.

The four advisors have been identified and efforts have been initiated to verify his statements relative to them. One of the four has been contacted but, because his alleged contact with SC had been during 1965/1966 his recollection was hazy, but thought he recalled Trieu as being a Captain. The rank is probably correct; SC stated that he was a Colonel in his letter.

Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam records are being researched to verify his having received the Bronze Star.

US ARMY INTERVIEWER

The US Army interviewer was dispatched on 30 October 1979 to interview several Southeast Asian refugees in the US concerning a variety of PW/MIA information. The interviewer talked to two refugees in Chicago, Illinois. One of these refugees possessed hearsay information concerning live Americans in Laos and the other had hearsay information regarding the gravesite of three Americans in Vietnam. The interviewer next traveled to Oakland, California to attempt to obtain from a refugee the dogtag found at an American gravesite near Da Nang, Vietnam. While the interviewer was en route to Oakland, another Indochinese refugee surfaced in Portland, Oregon. He claimed to have seen live Americans in the central highlands of Vietnam in 1978. The interviewer scheduled an appointment on November 7th to interview the refugee in Oregon. Following that debriefing, the interviewer will return to California in order to interview the half-sister of [redacted] for background information on her brother. The interviewer will then travel to Arkansas to interview a newly arrived refugee who reportedly observed an American deserter to North Vietnam.

The interviewer maintains contact with DIA for clarification and guidance. At this time, a date for his return to Washington has not been scheduled.

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DOCUMENT PROCESSING RECORD			CONTROL NUMBER 3054
RETURN TO OFFICE, CHAIRMAN, JCS-ROOM 2E865, THE PENTAGON			DATE RECEIVED 19 Nov 79
DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION CJCS fr/DIA Kelln			DATE OF DOCUMENT 16 Nov 79
SUBJECT PW/MIA Status Report			
THE ABOVE-DESCRIBED DOCUMENT HAS BEEN RECEIVED IN THIS OFFICE. CIRCULATION OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE LIMITED TO INDIVIDUALS INDICATED BELOW. THE DOCUMENT WILL BE RETURNED TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE FOR RECORD PRIOR TO DISPATCH TO ANOTHER OFFICE, OR OTHER DISPOSITION. THIS FORM WILL NOT BE REMOVED FROM SUBJECT DOCUMENT.			
TO	NAME	INITIAL	REMARKS
	CHAIRMAN, JCS 00	Jr1	DJS- cy dir 19 November 1979
4	EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT 02	T	1. INFORMATION - SHOW.
3	DEPUTY EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT 03	G	2. Adm Kelln provides a summary of PW/MIA info he has given to Congress. Looks to me as though the bottom line is that although several recent reports of PW sightings are being carefully investigated, there is still no firm evidence that Americans remain incarcerated in SEA.
2	THE ASSISTANT TO THE CHAIRMAN 01	J	
5	ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT 04		
1	CHAIRMAN'S STAFF GROUP AIR FORCE MBR 01B	W19	
	CHAIRMAN'S STAFF GROUP NAVY MBR 01C		
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	CHAIRMAN'S STAFF GROUP ARMY MBR 01E		
1a	LEGAL ADVISOR AND LEGISLATIVE ASST 01F	K	
	SPECIAL ASSISTANT 01G		
	SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS 01H		
	ARMY AIDE 05		
	MARINE AIDE 05A		
	PROTOCOL 06		
<p style="text-align: right;">Jach COLONEL WOLCOTT</p>			

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